

PS 8457
A8E52
c.2



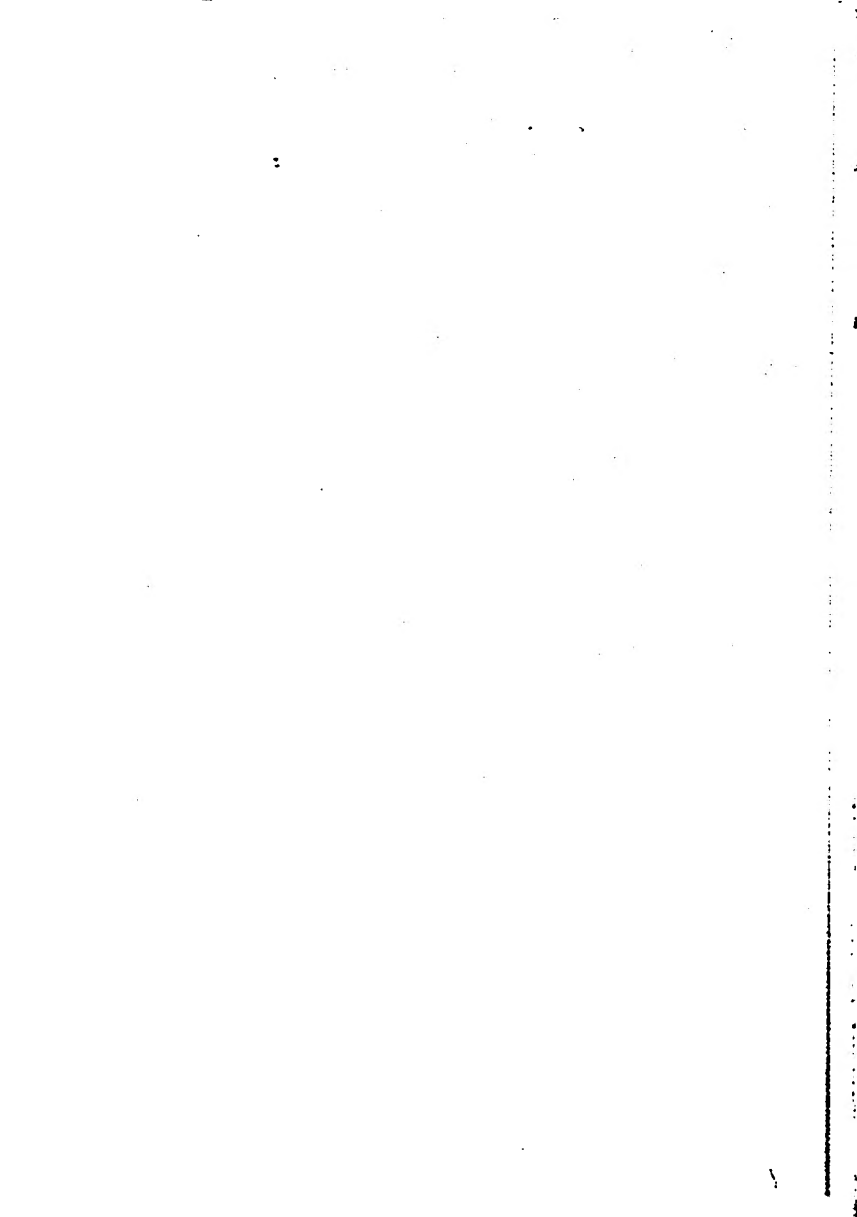
CANADA

NATIONAL LIBRARY
BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE

23A









7

EOS—A PRAIRIE DREAM

AND

OTHER POEMS.

By NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN.

OTTAWA:

Printed by the Citizen Printing and Publishing Company.

1884

187189

PS 8.457

H 7 E 52

C. 2

TO
LADY MACDONALD

THE FOREMOST WOMAN OF HER TIME IN CANADA

THE FOLLOWING POEMS
ARE RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY
THE AUTHOR.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

PREFACE.

The following poems will form portion of a volume soon to appear in England. I publish them here because they are Canadian in inspiration and aim, and though I am assured on all hands that criticism is in a low state amongst us, and that the market for native literary productions is dead in Canada, I think it would be an insult to the Canadian people were I to publish the following poems first in another country.

My object in writing the principal one—"Eos—A Prairie Dream"—was to strike a true and high note in Canadian politics and literature, a note above and beyond anything to be found in or beneath the din of party strife. When I conceived the idea of treating the myth of Eos and mingling the classical and the modern, my first question was—Can such a theme be treated artistically? Whether I have answered this in the affirmative it will be for the critics to judge. While seeking to make the poem a work of art, I aimed at indicating directly and allegorically what is our true position in Canada at this hour, and whence for whatever is discouraging in the present situation redemption must come. It was a prince who more than a generation ago said Parliamentary Government was on its trial. This is said to-day by a man who wears the name and honours of the author of the first reform bill. No man who was not a base flatterer—and he only when standing on a hustings—would say the electors are using their power well. But dark as things are and gloomy as is the outlook, I have faith in free institutions, for these reasons:—I see the course of history has been one of progress and I believe "there is a hand that guides." The spark from a match has set a whole forest in a blaze, and a few minds kindled by the true

fire would prove at once beacons and transmitters. The first thing is to realize our true position: the next to look to the future; the third to draw into our literary, social and political life the power of a noble inspiration.

The second poem—"A Year"—is an attempt to give a continuous picture of the varying features of the Canadian year, with the suggestion of a little romance.

Every poem in the present little collection has been composed in Ottawa within the last few months—while delayed unwilling from my far Prairie home—and I am conscious that in giving them thus hastily to the public I offend against Horace's rule, and render it a certainty that there must be many irregularities which the file would remove. But I dare believe that the poems are calculated to do good at the present time and to this conviction I am ready to sacrifice an *ad unguem* scrupulosity.

OTTAWA, May 23rd, 1884.

EOS—A PRAIRIE DREAM.

I had been thinking how the goddess of
The morning red, at close of every night,
Announcing coming light of day to gods
And mortals, drove her lambent car across
The sky, and how she stoop'd and pluck'd those flowers
Of men,—Orion, Cephalus, Tithonus—
Tithonus, who became a wrinkled shade
So changed from him whose strength and beauty pierced
The heart of Eos in its tender dawn
Of love.

A sunny sky of blue arching
A plain filled with rich grasses, roses pink
And pale, the cry of insects, songs of birds,
Hid deep in meadows wild, and from the creek
Came thousand-voiced upon the sultry air
The bull-frog's weary canticle. I slept
And dreamt the goddess bent above me there
On that wide prairie, and made my heart
20 Distend with dumb, bewildering, dreadful joy;
Near mine the snowy forehead isled in gold,
Near mine the eyes of blue, ineffable, sweet,
And on my mouth the dewy rose of hers.

She rose and bared her milk-white arm, and drew
 Me near her and there flash'd a blinding light;
 Whirlwinds of flame swept o'er the grass; the plain
 Was one vast fire from rim to rim; but on
 We went till distance made the blaze look like
 The glow of western clouds at eve in summer,
 Just when the sun behind the purple hills
 Dips, leaving yellow luminous tracts behind,
 Like fame or memory of good deeds; the heart
 Is touched, and pleasing sadness steals into
 The soul. The sea soon spread beneath, with isles
 Of vines and palms and citron groves; a rush
 Of waters green and white—and we were whelm'd
 In depths which might engulf the navies of
 The world. I closed my eyes to die, when she
 Reached forth her lily hand with tapering fingers,
 40 Rosy-tipped, and touch'd me. At that touch
 Calm came. I breathed as in my native air,
 And she led on towards stately towers unique
 In architecture and in ornament.
 But when we neared the carven arch and door
 She turned and said:—"To-morrow you shall ride
 With me," and like a ghost she went, and blank
 And desolate, I knew not where to turn.

Far down where never sailors' plummet reach'd,
 Nor ever beam of piercing sunbeam stole,
 Nor dream of faint forgotten sound e'er stirred,

Ner ghost of earthly odours smote the sense,
 Wall'd in with silent, fearful wayes, its roof
 Of night and pallid waning stars, upheld -
 By massy pillars quarried from the dark,
 The home mysterious of the goddess stands;
 Its solemn spacious chambers carpeted
 With dusk, and hung with swarthy tapestries.
 Ebon the garniture; profuse on lounge
 And litter lay the furs of animals
 60 Extinct a thousand centuries or more,
 Of which the rocks no hint to science gives.
 Along the halls and corridors obscure,
 In many a dim recess, rose stately shapes
 Of blackness. Fed by flowers fresh-gather'd in
 The gardens of Persephoné, the air
 Was sweet—a rich pervading fragrance pure,
 And through the rayless splendours of these halls
 I groped and found where far within, in such
 A room, so full of sleep-compelling airs,
 So beautiful, so stately-solemn, still,
 As Silence weary of Time's fret and change
 Might choose for an eternal sleep, upon
 A couch dark as a piece of Erebus
 But soft as summer cloud, its frame made of
 The lethal bronze the Titan forges in
 The thunder-cloud, in dreamless slumber Eos
 Lay. Ah! no darkness here! From the white limbs
 Light shone, and glory from her golden head!

- Across her hips, a cloud-like veil, dim lace
 80 Of magic woof, wrought by the fingers of
 The mist, was thrown, but failed to hide her form
 Which shone revealed, as shines the sun through half
 Enkindled vapour; like twin pearls large
 Her eyelids. Airy forms watched round and when
 She moved they left, and straight she rose and for
 A moment stood, a vision fairer than
 E'er haunted a young sculptor's dream. Her head
 She shook and like a cataract of fire
 And gold that sweeps o'er marble rocks, white marble,
 O'er shoulder, breast and flank her hair fell down
 And reached her pearly ankles pale. Her maids
 Who seem'd compact of starlight, now return'd,
 The bath prepared, and, like to Artemis
 When by the hunter spied, but riper in
 Her beauty, Titian's to Correggio's
 Venus, or what the matron of some few
 Years happy married life is to the girl
 She was before love struck the fountains of
 Her life and all the streams of tenderness
 100 Set free, Eos stood while they poured the water
 O'er her, parting the hair to let the wave
 Reach the white back and lave the fruitful breast.
 Upon her flesh the drops enamour'd stood,
 Trembled, and rolled unwilling down; around
 Her form a purple robe, diaphanous,
 She flung, and passed into the hall where-through

Now gleam'd a light, clear, soft, diffused. Her face
 Was full of youth and purpose, and she cast
 No glance at all aside, nor did she heed
 The helpless pathos of the filmy hands
 Tithonus held out pleading, nor dumb prayers
 Regard. Before the high arched carven door
 There rushed the blaze of golden car and steeds
 Of fire, with lightning shod, their eyes like pits
 Of flame, and standing near, the spirits of
 Essential beauty sang clear voiced and sweet:—

CHORUS.

Hail! day's herald reappearing!

Joy of earth! young earth's adorning!

120 Wings out-spread and fast careering,

Down the gulfs of Chaos darkling,

Soon Black Night will disappear;

While her star above her sparkling.

Comes with shining robes the Morning,

Orange-tinted, purple-glowing,

Skirts unfounced, and freely flowing.

Songs of birds, and saucy crowing

Shrill of wakeful Chanticleer.

Flashing rills down bowery highlands,

Meadowed streams with streamlets flushing,

Lucid waves round flowery islands,

In thy glance will soon be blushing.

And the lily's pallid cheek will burn with thy dyes;
 And the leaves and fields will twinkle
 With the dews thy tears besprinkle,
 Tears from thine immortal eyes.

Where now darkness grimly gloometh,

Soon leaf-shadows will be playing,

Over sunny banks where bloometh,

Drinking daily draughts of sunny air,

Sweet as love and glad as day,

Flowers too bright to know decaying,

They are so immortal fair,

Though their doom is to decay.

SEMICHORUS I.

Mount thy car!

We come from far—

Come from watching fairies footing

Steps fantastic in the moonlight,

On enchanted lawns of green;

On the left white billows shooting,

Whose spray showers of margarite

Play o'er sheets of silver sheen:

On the right a cedarn cover,

Where coy Dian with her lover

Might have met and kissed unseen.

Mount thy car!

Fain would we be viewing

160 Thy soft tears the earth bedewing,
 The meadows green and mountains,
 The forests thick and fells,
 Leafy dells, gardened closes,
 Roses red, pink and pale,
 Towery hyacinth and jасmin and blue bells,
 And the thousand flowers unnamed which regale
 With the odours they exhale,
 Drunk enraptured sense subduing
 Through the perfume-laden gale,
 Bearing spoils from the wild roses,
 From pied pansies, nectar'd posies—
 Purple chalices and golden
 Of man's eyes still un beholden,
 Which the bee to-day shall drain;
 From the grasses big with sun and rain,
 From the vines no careful hand shall train,
 Which run riot round wild fountains
 Or dwell within the dale.

SEMICHORUS II.

180 Mount thy car!
 Jewelled, golden, asbestine,
 We would have divine delight,
 And would gaze
 On the maze
 Of commingling waters' blaze,

On the teeming ocean's daughters,
 Lakes and seas;
 On the haze
 Over lakes and wooded mountains,
 Over fields and spray-crowned fountains,
 Where the earliest day-gleams shiver,
 On mild-glinting rill and river,
 Where the youngest morning beams
 Plash in streamlets play on streams,
 Waterfalls, like ruby wine,
 In thy amethystine light.
 Mount thy car!

Now while they sang we mounted that high car,
 And, ere I was aware, Eos, the reins
 Held in both hands, was tearing up the steep
 200 Way phosphorescent, I beside her. Tongues
 Of flame played in the horses' manes and all
 Seem'd hurrying flame, and soon the cold raw air
 Of the dark world was stirred, and the stars blinked
 And glimmered pale and went, and up the heavens
 And o'er the broad Ægean blood-red shafts
 Were mixed with yellow, sapphire and beryl rays.

Right over Athens she drew up her team,
 Air-pawing, breathing blaze-mixed smoke, and down
 On tower and temple glory showered divine.
 A world of pictures from old books pass'd thro'
 My brain. Methought to greet us Pallas came,

Cold, love-proof maid, serene, omnipotent
 In arms, who never snatch'd from human fields
 A mortal youth, to dare the perils of
 Immortal charms, nor ever shed a tear,
 No, not when battle fields were heaped with slain,
 And widows tore their hair and screamed, and with
 Their woe-compelling rainy grief the couch
 A river made; her followed, glorious throng,
 220 The singers, statesmen, sages, heroes old,
 All that made Athens what she was, "the eye
 Of Greece;" while far from Thebes Memnonian strains
 Were borne thro' many a flowery-scented vale.
 The mind of Eos turned to him she bare
 Tithonus, his ripe beauty and his fate
 Unripe, by fierce Achilles sent to death.
 Her large blue eyes filled up with tears, such tears
 As rosy childhood sheds, and swift, all blades
 Of grass, all leaves, all flowers were gemm'd with dew;
 And oh! her beauty as she dash'd aside
 Those drops from her young cheeks and held her way!

We paus'd a moment o'er Imperial Rome,
 Her tale—the Milky Way of mighty deeds,
 Her streets a wilderness of monuments,
 Her very dust made of the bones of saints;
 The Column, Forum, Coliseum, Arch
 Passed like the shadow of a bird, and while
 Cæsar and Cicero and their compeers.

Yet fill'd the mind, the vine-clad valleys
 240 Of France were gone, and lo! the Atlantic broad
 Was well in view. The chariot flying o'er
 The watery plain, bright roads of purple wide
 Were dashed this way and that, till now the river
 Of St. Lawrence gain'd we speed for waving seas.
 Of prairies wild.

We pass'd that city hoar
 Which wears an old face in a world all new,
 From whose high plain and storied citadel,
 Wolfe's glory streams for ever, and we mark'd
 How the broad river roll'd along, hemmed in
 With wooded shores, the land and water all
 One mighty maze of ruby sun-lit mist,
 Far-burning wood and sheets of silver fire.
 A shade of thought passed like a cloudlet o'er
 Her face, and like a summer cloudlet went.
 "Lo! there," she said, "a piece of French antique
 'Gainst which the waves of time its blasts and storms
 Would seem to break in vain. They cling down there—
 Is't strange?—to glories and traditions old
 260 Of other lands and of long-vanished years,
 And while they live beneath one rule they own
 The civilization of another not
 In harmony therewith; nor can they cease
 To look beyond the sea until that day,
 Far off, which impulse new will give and bind

The heart's affections round the land they till,
 Their mother then, no nursing substitute
 For one long leagues away. They have the force,
 They have the genius of a mighty race;
 Poets and thinkers, statesmen eloquent;
 Their peasants gentle, virtuous folk; but lost
 Are many winning graces of the Gaul
 At home. Old wine is pent in bottles new;
 You see the same thing farther west in those
 Blind egotists who damn in others what
 They do themselves—the merest slaves of cant,
 Of what has been—incapable of deeds
 Strong-limbed and bold, such as are born of thought
 And will. But there shall come a race in which

280 This Gallic stream will play a noble part,
 A race which, gathering strength from diverse founts,
 Will—a majestic river—onward flow
 Full-volum'd, vast, its guide its proper bent,
 And take its character and hues from all
 That makes the present great—rolling along
 A crowded avenue of wealth and power."

She shook the reins which gleam'd like lightning bands,
 The horses toss'd their meteor heads, the clouds
 Flew round their feet in darting flames, the mist
 Rose up illuminated round our wake,
 Which blazed a diamond track for many a league.
 Upon my brow the wind was cold; I heard

The rush of wheels so quick each look'd a fire
 Of dazzling brightness; held by power divine
 I held my place.

But now she drew the reins
 Tight, and the horses stopped. — ~~I heard the singing~~
 Of tributary streams, and looking down
 Saw where the river—the Ottawa—cut out
 300 Of the eldest ribs of earth a theatre vast.
 Like threads of silver run from silver coin
 To coin, it wound between the hills, and spread
 At intervals in wide and beauteous lakes.

Right in the midst a hill fit throne for rule,
 And crowning this were stately structures, towers
 And domes and gothic arches quaint, with rich
 Device of ornament. A shade of grave
 Reflection passed across her face but did
 Not mar the outlines of immortal youth
 Nor dim its hues. Her eyes looked far away
 As though all future time was glass'd within
 Their depths: so look'd the Cumæan Sibyl's,
 Her first convulsions o'er, when she foretold
 Æneas all the years held in their womb
 For his descendants.

"These," she said, "were built
 By one of large conceptions, forecast sage,
 Imperial dreams, in whom Ulyssean wiles
 Were wedded with a grasp for state affairs

320 Which mates him with those mighty minds whose care
 And patient wisdom nations found; great souls,
 Whose monuments are continents, from whom
 Whole races drink their inspiration.
 He had to work with crude materials gross,
 His task to weld in one wide-scatter'd states.
 Abroad, at home, fat ignorance beset
 His path; the smug sagacity of men
 Purbblind,—the chosen voice of those ill fit
 To choose who shall declare what law must be —
 The roar of calumny, faction's furious feuds,
 The want of heart, of faith, proper to times
 When Mammon-worship is the shameless cult
 Of most,—with these and more he had to fight,
 But he nor blench'd nor faltered one small hour,
 But like a law bore on, borne up by hopes
 Such as are parents of immortal things."

She ceased. The sense's memory, tremulous with
 Her tones, like some rare music never heard
 Before, with happy pain my heart made faint,
 340 And in my eyes the waves well'd up from founts
 Of joy and grief; the chords of mourning thrill'd
 As for some loss divine, while all the springs
 Of rapture moved; meanwhile thro' tears I mark'd
 The rosy bulge of delicate clouds which slept
 On either side. She said:

"Lo! beautiful lives

Dissolved in mist and rocked asleep by airs
Impalpable as they."

But up there came
The phantom roar of waters. Bending o'er
The car which now was near the earth, I saw
Where over rocks wild torrents gnashed and foam'd,
And I was noting how the mass of white
And furious billows, catching rays of dawn,
Began to show like a great rose in vase
Of silver, fringed with jasmin flowers, when she
Continued:—

"Yes, there is the seat of a
Young people destin'd to be great and free,
360 Tho' oft blind ignorance and greed these halls
Invade, and in fair Freedom's very fane
Swine guttles. Ah! these eyes have seen what man
Can do. Full many a morning have I watch'd
The envious crowd in Athens spit out hate
Of noble Pericles, the balanc'd man,
Wise with all wisdom, beautiful with love
Of every art, who made Athena's home
Worthy of her—that light for evermore
To man; for sink he ne'er so low, the hog
In him may overgrow the sout, and lust
And drunkenness drive far the graceful forms
Who wait on the pure life, still must he rise
Again, redeemed, drawn by the power of Athens—
Her beauty fairer than the lover dreams

Of her he loves—the greatness of the mind
 Calm, self-contained, the music struck by souls
 For goodness passionate from nature's strings,
 The scorn of death, the love of noble deeds—
 All this will rest on mankind like a spell,

380 And spite of filth and crime, disease and death,
 Cause them to move towards excellence. Ah! true,
 The course is slow. The freshening morning comes
 Upon the heels of night and gives each day
 A new birth to the world; the years steal by
 And leave behind their legacies of fact;
 The generations rise and fall like waves,
 But ere they die the store of knowledge swell;
 The centuries bearing names and deeds of note,
 And petty pangs and lyric joys, and loves
 Too weighty for frail lives—the centuries flee;
 A thousand years are gone like yesterday;
 Old empires sink into decrepitude;
 New kingdoms rise; even races pass away;
 New types appear; new forms of civic life—
 But man is still the same blind fool, the same
 Base groveller, still will he hug his chains,
 And still pursue what leads to chains and death.
 Down the ruining precipices of time
 Tyrant and tyrannies are hurled, and man
 400 A moment rises free and stands erect;
 The future opens like a dawn of spring;
 It seems as if afar in depths of space

The stars were harping choral symphonies
 In sympathy with worlds born again,
 And a new era stood upon the verge
 Of fact. Alas! Vile use has bred the slave's
 Habit. The horse has thrown his rider but
 Runs wild, bewilder'd, till another's in
 The saddle and he feels a master's touch;
 The late wash'd sow grows sad with cleanliness,
 But as the pig imagination glows
 With dreams of wallowing near, she grunts with joy.
 Ruled by Pisistratus men could not be
 Worse slaves than they are there in that young land
 In this new world. They have academies;
 And from a thousand tabernacles gleams
 The cross, the symbol sweet of lore more deep
 Than Greek philosophy, though it requires
 Athenian lamps to bring its light out clear;
 420 They have the garner'd lore of ages old
 And new, but cannot think—the serfs of bold
 And blatant calumny, whose breath of life
 Is rank vituperation of the best
 And wisest men. That form of civic life
 Which liberty and government by the sage
 Secures, nowhere is seen. Democracy
 Puts chattering apes in seats of power, and howls
 Hosannas praising not humility
 Divine an ass bestriding, but the ass
 Himself, out-braying hideous egotisms,

Richly caparison'd and capering o'er
 The prostrate crowd, while those who live, the salt
 Of human things, who keep society
 From mortifying, hated are and push'd
 Aside; low cunning more and more is crown'd.
 Without some practice, who can plough a field?
 Without instruction, who could make a watch?
 Without much study, who can master art?
 But men will act as if the veriest boor
 240 Were fit for government, while government
 Of all things man can do is hardest, most
 Beset with problems such as only minds
 Of finest fibre, trained and confident
 From knowledge and the sense of power can cope
 With. Give to poor small brains the driving of
 This chariot, Phaethon's fate awaits him, worse
 Than Phaethon's fate, perhaps, the people whom
 He tries to rule. But still things onward move;
 And though the curve that's near will seem depraved,
 And is, in time's large circles progress lives;
 And 'tis permitted generous hopes to keep,
 That in a far off day the dull will honour
 Worth with other meed than hate. The heart
 Of mediocrity will sweetened be
 By sweet benevolences born of time
 And sad experience. Benefactors of
 Their race will then not have to wait till death
 For their reward; but many a lapsing year

Must pass, before the harp from which the Fates
 460 Will strike this music has been made, and oh!
 How many thousand times my burning wheels
 Will lighten round this globe before I can
 Announce that happy morn; the day will still
 Steal into narrow rooms where genius pines
 In want, or breaks his heart against the odds
 Of the blind, baffling, brutish multitude.
 More than a century ago I look'd
 Into the room of Chatterton and saw
 The boy of genius dead by his own hand,
 The empty vial near. I've peer'd between
 The bars which held Cervantes in; obscure
 And poor and blind great Milton felt my presence;
 And often have I seen the faithful black
 Attendant of poor Camoens return
 From begging all the night for food to feed
 His master destin'd soon to die a pauper
 In an almshouse. But why pursue a theme
 Too trite and sad? So sad if gods with grief
 For human things could suffer, tears of mine
 480 Would flow, so that the sun which follows hard
 Upon our track could not dry-up the ground
 This summer day. Right under where we stand
 The savage ruled and on that very hill
 His councils held, councils which in the mind
 Of Jove rank just as high as those which now
 A race self-styled superior hold, alone

In cunning great. They do not feed on dogs
 Or human flesh, but moral cannibals
 They are. They kill with venomous lies and then
 Like ghouls they batten on the corpse, and scenes
 Humiliating as an Indian dance
 Around a white dog swimming in its broth,
 Have been enacted in that chamber where
 A Cicero should find himself at home,
 And Burke's deep wisdom be a common thing.
 Who worships truth, who honours liberty?
 A few. Too few. The mass are lost in love
 Of gain, in low desires, conceptions all
 Unworthy of the task they should essay.

600 Talk statesmanship to them, you cast your pearls
 Away; but rave and slaver out abuse
 And they will crunch the hardest epithets,
 With joy the garbage bolt, and gulp the swill
 Of reeking rhetoric."

Her cheek here seem'd
 To burn as with a touch of angry red.
 The reins she shook which flashed like lightning bands
 Along the horses' backs. Like fire when winds
 Are strong, whole streets ablaze, roofs crashing in,
 The sky 'red-hot, the roar as of mad seas
 At war, the firemen's toil in vain—like fire
 They forward sprang, and, in a twinkling, towers
 And blocks of masonry majestic
 Looked like a doubtful edifice of dreams,

Dim, air-built castles of forgotten years;
 The cataract a second glanc'd—a gleam
 Of white 'gainst rainbow dust; the lakes swept by
 Reflecting now the forms of fiery steeds
 And now a rosy shadow, and again
 520 The gem-like radiance of our burnish'd trail.
 At last the prairies wide with tint of flower
 As delicate as her own cheek.

She smiled

And said: "I play the gadding gossip for
 Your sake to-day—see where the iron horse
 Pants, puffs out smoke and snorts and cries and bears
 Long trains thro' what was wilderness a year
 Ago; flinging his smoke aloft he makes
 A passing cloud. Upon these plains immense
 Where here and there the signs of man at work
 Are seen, it is but yesterday the red
 Man, the poor savage chased the buffalo.
 I've seen him in his prime and his decay;
 But save the wild ox and his pursuers
 This land has been a solitude since it
 Was heaved up from the sea. For centuries?—
 Oh! yes, for thousands, those bright lakes have shone
 Unmark'd; the wild ducks lived upon their breasts
 Nor feared the fowler's dart; the roses bloomed;
 540 The gopher dug his hole and stood erect,
 And ran and lived his lonely graceful life,
 And played among the grasses and the flowers;

The shore-lark sang; the prairie hen and plover
 Their broods unharmed reared; the antelope
 At times a prize to the Indian's arrow fell;
 The wolf at all hours prowled in search of prey;
 But not a trace of man, save when the chase
 Brought savage hunters from the river's marge,
 The beautiful wooded vales of the Qu'Appelle,
 Saskatchewan, and streams subsidiary.
 The Indian's doom should touch your heart. I've seen
 Types disappear before. But kindnesses
 On dying races, as on dying men
 Should wait, and Canada may well be proud,
 And England, too, of that just spirit which
 Has ruled her councils; these are things the gods
 Do not forget. But lo! the sun full-orbed
 Comes on apace. We must not further pause."

The reins she shook which flash'd like lightning bands,
 69 And forward rushed those coursers wild, and wheels
 Of fire, and soon the snowy peaks of hills
 So high, our horse's feet might well
 Have touch'd the topmost, were empurpled. Cones
 Which rose at frequent intervals grew pink,
 And red, while clefts and chasms fathom-deep,
 Gloomed dark and dreadful. The eagle was awake
 And wheel'd with sail-broad pinions wide in search
 Of quarry; back and wings to us seem'd like
 Gilt bronze of antique armour worn by knights
 Of old, on which flames out the light of fire

In some baronial hall hung round with casques,
 And breast-plates, shields, and shirts of mail and spears
 Transverse; the founder of the house he glowers
 Above the hearth huge as Cathedral door.
 The eagle's shadow on the white peak's side
 Was as the shade of some long-pointed cloud
 When winds are veering.

Past the Fraser—past

Those lucid streams whose sands are gold, and now
 580 Mirroring many a shape—outlines too fair
 For gross embodiment in flesh—young forms
 Of tender beauty, robed in hues of heaven,
 Attendant on that glory-scattering car,
 The rippleless ocean lay beneath us, bright;
 No wrinkle on its vast and placid brow;
 No cloud in view, and as we flew along
 Deep voices from around the car poured forth
 Sweet strains which o'er the ocean rolled and died
 In frozen whispers mid the polar seas.
 The ocean was now left behind—a breadth
 Of light. A score of dusky nations old
 We pass, then plunge beneath the engulfing waves.
 A rush of waters green and white—again
 I closed my eyes to die, when she reach'd forth
 Her hand with tapering fingers rosy-tipped
 And touched me. Then once more myself, I saw
 Her steeds, unbreath'd, draw up, and how there flashed
 A sudden light o'er carven arch and door,

And sable towers and pillars glimmering fair;
 600 And colonnades stretch'd darkling far away;
 And in the distance vistas dim were seen,
 Like walks enchanted made for fairy feet;
 And there stood Twilight fading fast away.
 And like a fantasy he went, and Eos,
 A form of light, moved into shadowy halls,
 And all the busy upper world was day.
 And I awoke and turned my steps to where
 A mile away on the monotonous plain
 The hammers rang on shingle roofs, and grew
 610 Each hour the "city" ~~of a few~~ weeks old.



A YEAR.

The depths of infinite shade,
 The soft green dusk of the glade,
 With fiery fingers the frost had fret,
 And dyed a myriad hue,
 Making of forests temples of golden aisles;
 The swooning rose forgot to bloom;
 In fragrant graves slept violets blue;
 And earlier shook her locks of jet
 Night, with her subtle shadowy wiles,
 Night, with her starry gloom,—
 Before like suns which could not set,
 Your eyes shone clear on mine,
 Flushing the heart with feelings high,
 Touching all life as thrills the sky,
 When over cloudy pavements thunders rumble and roll;
 Then flamed the faltering blood-like wine,
 And overflowed the soul.

Through wintry weeks, the sun above
 Oceaned in blue, the frost below;
 Through blustry hours, when fiercely drove
 Winds razor-armed the drifting snow,
 And peeled the face and pinched the ear,
 And hurled the avalanche of fear
 From roof-tops on the muffled crowd;
 The air one blinding cloud;—
 Through many a brisk and bracing day,

The sky wide summer as in June,
 The joyous sleigh bells ringing tune
 More blithe than aught musicians play;
 The pure snow gleaming white;
 Men's eyes fulfilled of finer light,
 Of finer tints the women's hair;
 Their cheeks aglow, and full and pink;
 The skaters sweeping through the rink,
 Like swallows through the air:
 We talked, and walked, and laughed and dreamed,
 And now snow-wreaths, auroral rays,
 The winter moon, day's blinding blaze,
 The merry bells, the skaters' grace
 Recall thy laugh, recall thy face
 As dazzling as it earliest beamed!

Love stirred in the frozen branches,
 And straight the world was crown'd with green,
 And as a shipwright his trim craft launches,
 Each bud put forth in a night its might,
 And the trees stood proud in summer sheen,
 Their foliage dense, a grateful screen
 'Gainst the bold, bright-heat and the full, fierce light.
 Like cathedral windows the gardens glowed,
 Mirrors of light the broad lakes gleamed,
 His cunning in song the robin showed,
 And the shore-lark swung on a branch and dreamed;
 And boats were gliding, lover-laden

Over lakes and streams that will yet be known,
 The boy in flannel, the blooming maiden
 In muslin white with a ribbon zone.
 The chestnuts fell. From their dull green sheaths
 With satin-white linings, the nuts burst free;
 And as sun-down came, bright hazy wreaths
 The spirit of eve hang from tree to tree.
 The weeks rolled on, the lush green fields
 Became billowy breadths of golden grain,
 And all roots and fruits the kind earth yields
 Were piled on the labouring wain.—
 But you were by the cliff-barred white-crested sea,
 And I where the delicate pink of the prairie rose
 Amid rich coarse grasses hides,
 Where the sunset's a boisterous pageantry,
 And the mornings the tenderest tints disclose,
 Where far from the shade and shelter of wood,
 The prairie hen rears her speckled brood,
 And the prairie wolf abides,
 And lonely memory searching through
 Found no such stars in the orb'd past,
 As the glad first greeting 'twixt me and you,
 And the sad, mad meeting which was our last.

IN MEMORY OF A DINNER.

In other days round classic boards, I met
 With those whose young brows bore the laurel, pure
 From stain. Talking of art and strong to endure
 All things, we felt youth's star could never set.
 The wine I spurn now like an anchoret,
 But oft from out the past I fain would lure
 The joyous wit, the impromptu portraiture,
 The high philosophies which haunt me yet.

Fresh as those you gave us for a whet,
 Apicius sent cool bivalves to his friend
 In Parthia. Many millions would he spend
 On feasts colossal; but I'd make a bet
 Than yours a choicer did he never get,
 And higher our young wits did ne'er ascend.

OTTAWA, March 9th, 1884.

FRIENDSHIP.

Sweet is the moon above old English trees,
 And sweet her light on dewy velvet lawns,
 And sweet her pallid shade in purple dawns,
 And passing sweet her sheen on languid seas.
 O'er sleeping kine on broad-extending leas
 Dispers'd o'er the darkling green like pawns,
 Her light is sweet, and sweet when deep down yawns
 The abyss, or whitens far wide prairies.

So friendship whereso'er we go is sweet;
 Whate'er of loss or triumph we may share;
 Whatever we endure or do or dare;
 Nor can fate all be dark, if round our feet
 Its rays are shed; however 'mersed in care
 Beauty and Peace amid life's shadows meet.

TO "BAY MI."

Lacking a good three years of seven,
 Sunny haired boy with eyes of heaven,
 With everlasting ripple of laughter;
 As yet no touch of worldly leaven
 In thy frank soul. Oh! how you capture
 All hearts, and drown in present joy
 The cares which come from before and after,
 Sunny haired, blue-eyed, happy boy!

Running, jumping, never at rest,
 Now using one toy, now abusing another,
 Caning your dearest friends in jest,
 Ruling father and sister and mother,
 And bowing all wills to your high behest—
 I could watch your movements all day long:
 Whether you laugh or whether you cry,
 Like a bird or a rill you enchain the eye,
 And you fill the heart like a burst of song.

As pageants held in ruined towers
 Will make the sad place glad once more,
 As laughing waves on wreck-strewn shore,
 As summer sunshine after showers,
 You brighten up the weary heart,

And charm with sweet unconscious wiles,
 So that the tears which still will start,
 Before they fall are lost in smiles,
 And you are folded to my breast,
 And patted and caressed;
 My hand runs through your golden hair,
 The world is seen in hues of love,
 There's not a cloud in heaven above,
 And all the earth is fair!
 Scorn and hate—each evil passion flies
 Before the beauty of your sinless eyes.

You—best of preachers I have seen!
 You steal into the heart, bid flow
 The dried up streams of long ago,
 The farthest shores of memory glow
 With fragrant flowers and tempering green,
 So that this truth I more discern,
 If moral beauty we would wed,
 We must, as the Great Master said,
 Of little children learn.

OTTAWA, April 17th, 1884.

